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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the role of teachers as mediators of the social studies curriculum. The first section summarizes the literature on teacher cognition and describes the hermeneutic, or methodological, turn in that literature. The second section describes teachers as curriculum agents--that is, as professionals who bring intellectual and moral agency to their work with children, social studies, and schooling. This description is largely historical, emphasizing the rise of the technical idea of practice against which the notion of teacher-as-agent is clearly brought to light. The third section provides three examples of inquiry on teachers' mediation. These include ethnography, phenomenology, and critical analysis. An extensive reference section is included. (TRS)

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The Social Studies Teacher as Curriculum Agent

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Alfred North Whitehead once said to Bertrand Russell, "There are two kinds of people in the world, the muddle-headed and the simple-minded. You Bertee, are simple-minded, and I am muddle-headed." I begin with this quip to clear the way for curriculum theorizing--a way that brings into the open the critical and the hermeneutic as well as the all-too-familiar technical. I want to open a forum that permits both the muddle-headed and the simple-minded in deliberation on social education.

Macdonald (1981) proposed a clearing of this sort. He wanted not to obliterate the technical preoccupation in curriculum work but to engage it in a hermeneutic conversation in which understanding, as distinct from mere explanation, might obtain. The technical, or what Pinar (1978) called the traditional, approach to curriculum tends to be uncritically devoted to a historically recent form of rationality bent on explanation. To explain, as Macdonald pointed out, is to simplify, to ex-plain or "flatten out":

> Almost all of our curriculum theory efforts are attempts to explain (flatten out), which are usually intended to lead to prediction and control. Thus, implicit in this form of rational theory is the dualism of theory and practice and the assumption that the "proof of the pudding" is in practice. The paradox of rationalist theory is in effect that it leads to an anti-intellectual priority in doing. (p. 131)

Paper presented at the symposium, "Teachers' Mediation of Social Studies Curricula," at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1986.

Its paradox, in other words, is that it often manufactures what it seeks to overcome. The technical begets the technical.

My project in this paper is to open a clearing in which the technical, the critical, and the hermeneutic--i.e., both the simple-minded and the muddle-headed--can be brought to bear on understanding teachers as mediators of the social studies curriculum. This is a task of some moment historically as a new philosophy of education, one that is more technical than ever in its vision of what it means to be educated and competent, ascends to a privileged position in public discourse on education in this country (Aoki, 1984). An understanding of teachers as mediators of the social studies curriculum counters this dominant philosophy with more accurate and less constraining portrayals of teachers and schooling--more accurate because they are grounded in both being and intersubjectivity, and less constraining because they do not presuppose teachers as objects in a curriculum production system.

I shall proceed in three sections. The first will summarize the burgeoning literature on teacher cognition and describe a hermeneutic turn in that literature. Then I will describe a conception of teachers as curriculum agents--that is, as professionals who bring intellectual and moral agency to their work with children, social studies, and the milieu of schooling. This description will be largely historical, emphasizing the rise of the technical conception of practice against which the notion of agency is most clearly brought into relief. Having done this, I will provide three examples of inquiry on teachers' mediation.

The Hermeneutic Turn in Research on Teaching

Research on teacher cognition as it relates to teacher behavior and student achievement is a recent development in the study of teaching. In the 1960s and '70s, the idea of studying the pedagogic thoughts of teachers was advanced infrequently, although with some enthusiasm for its potential impact on student learning, curriculum implementation, and prevailing conceptions of teaching (Berliner, 1976; Gage, 1963; Shavelson, 1973). Dominating research on teaching at this time was the process-product paradigm, which had replaced the teacher characteristics paradigm (Lanier, 1978). The older of the two assumed that teachers were more or less born, not made; the process-product research overturned that belief with another, which held that there are effective instructional behaviors available to all teachers through learning. In this type of research, teacher behaviors considered likely to increase student achievement were specified, and the correlation between the frequency of their occurrence in classrooms and mean class achievement scores was determined. A high, positive correlation between a particular teacher behavior and student achievement suggested that the behavior was one that could be called effective. Examples of behaviors identified through such research are "direct instruction" (Gage, 1978; Rosenshine, 1979), "withitness" (Kounin, 1970), and brisk pacing (Good, Grouws, & Beckerman, 1976).

Process-product research was an important advance over the teacher characteristics paradigm. First, it focused on teacher <u>behaviors</u>, which were considered more maleable than the teacher-as-person characteristics

described in the prior approach; consequently, the process-product work held out hope for the improvement of teaching without requiring the replacement of teachers. Second, the accumulation of a research base on effective teaching was a bulkwark against the nonempirical, "favorite method" approach that seemed the norm at that time. Workshop presenters, professors, and supervisors all seemed to have their own elixir. In social studies, favorites were higher-order questioning, the inquiry method, and the structure of the discipline approach. By the end of the last decade, there seemed to be some enthusiasm among teacher educators and public school supervisors to "listen to the data" (Brophy, 1979) instead of reiterating old claims that had little or no empirical warrant.

This shift was welcomed by many. But doubts were soon raised about its underside: a narrowly behavioristic model of teaching. And these doubts were the impetus for a new line of research on teaching focused on teachers' cognition. No retreat from the empirical thrust in research on teaching, the new work proposed that teachers' knowledge of and ability to produce effective behaviors were important but not sufficient conditions for helping students learn in classrooms. Criticism of the behavioral model centered on its inability to tell us how teachers might <u>appropriately apply</u> effective behaviors in their classrooms. Even when equipped with these behaviors, teachers still have the sizable task of deciding which behaviors to use and when, how, and with which students to use them. Typical of this new concern were Shavelson's comments:

> A teacher may possess a full range of teaching skills, but if he is unable to determine those situations in which a particular skill or subset of skills is appropriate, the consequences of his

> blindly carrying out those skills alone may not be those intended. (1981, p. 3).

And my own:

> Teaching-learning contexts change, and teachers' behaviors must change accordingly. The basic problem for teachers is, therefore, to acknowledge that there is no one best way to behave, and then to learn to make decisions in such ways that their behaviors are continually appropriate to the dynamic, moment-to-moment complexity of the classroom. (Parker, 1984, p. 220)

The watershed in inquiry on teachers' cognition was the publication in Curriculum Inquiry of Clark and Yinger's review of research on teachers' planning, judgment, implicit theories, and interactive decision making (1977). It remained the most influential on teachers' thinking until Clark and Peterson's review in the new Handbook of Research on Teaching (1986).

Findings from this new line of work have helped describe how teachers think before and during instruction. Consider, for example, these findings from stimulated-recall data on teachers' interactive decision making (decisions made during, rather than before or after, instruction).

1. Decisions made during preactive planning influence those made later during interactive teaching. Specifically, teachers tend to enter instruction with mental images that predetermine what they will consider a successful lesson (Morine-Dershimer, 1978-79). Moving lessons forward--that is, to completion according to image--is perhaps the chief intention during instruction (Parker & Gehrke, in press).

2. An image is usually played out until it or the class session ends; consequently, teachers tend to report making interactive decisions

primarily when the image is not being realized. The cues teachers use to judge the present success or failure of a lesson are primarily student cues indicating their level of involvement in the lesson (Housner & Griffey, 1983; Peterson & Clark, 1978).

3. Teaching tends to be the execution of a plan, or image, and interactive decisions are, consequently, related to fine tuning that plan in the face of a dynamic task environment (Morine-Dershimer, 1978-79).

4. Teacher decision making appears to become more frequent, more complex, and more attentive to student cues when teachers regularly reflect on their interactive decisions and talk about their decision making with others (Parker, 1984).

The implications for social education of just these findings from the rapidly accumulating literature on teachers' thinking are worth exploring. Consider, for example, the common stereotype at the secondary level of the football coach who also teaches social studies. If the fourth finding above can be generalized, then we might predict that coach-teachers reflect more on their coaching decisions than on their instructional decisions, which is why the former rather than the latter develops. Or, considering the findings on images, we might wonder just what sort of images coach-teachers have when they enter instruction. Perhaps the differences that exist among coach-teachers in the quality of their instruction can be partially accounted for by the differences in these images. Finally, consider the ample findings indicating that many students do not like

social studies (Shaughnessy & Haladyna, 1985). If the second finding can be generalized, then we might wonder whether and how social studies students are indicating their boredom. Further, we might wonder, on the one hand, if students are cuing, but their social studies teachers are not attending to those cues; or, on the other, if social studies teachers' images of a successful lesson are so unambitious as to permit an unusually high degree of student noninvolvement.

But rather than using this space to pursue further the implications of this literature, I want to turn my attention to what may be a more encompassing and fruitful line of inquiry on teachers' cognition. The research on teachers' cognition sketched above has been helpful primarily for advancing research on teaching from its recent preoccupation with behaviorism to a recognition that teachers do not simply behave, like automata of some kind, but are cognitive beings whose thinking and doing are of a piece. This recognition was a considerable advance in view of educational psychology's traditional (and not subtle) mistrust of "introspection."[1] Yet we must note a similarity between research on teacher behavior and the newer research on teacher thinking, which has been, in my judgment, the Achilles' heel of this advance. The advance might be characterized as a movement from regarding the teacher as a moving object, to regarding the teacher as a moving and thinking object. The similarity is the objectification of the teacher. While the earlier research truncated behavior, stripping it from the social and ontological contexts of practice, the newer research truncates cognition, dropping yet a different piece of professional practice in formaldehyde.

What accounts for this similarity? Following Hans-Georg Gadamer, I suggest that these two lines of research are of one nature because they share a common prior question, or question-behind-the-question. In the vernacular, both scratch the same itch. Gadamer, the post-Heideggerian philosopher who has proposed "philosophical hermeneutics" (1985), considers genuine questioning always an activity of the Socratic docta ignorantia.

> In order to be able to ask, one must want to know, which involves knowing that one does not know. . . . To ask a question means to bring into the open. The openness of what is in question consists in the fact that the answer is not settled. (Gadamer, 1985, p. 326)

Genuine questioning, then, is grounded in a radical negativity. On this ground, genuine questioning seeks to place the object of inquiry into the open. To be unaware of the genuine question behind a particular research question inclines the researcher to suppose, first, that he or she is acting objectively--suspended miraculously above the tradition in which inquiry itself is immersed. Palmer (1969) is explicit:

> There is no such thing as a nonpositional subject, and therefore there is also no such thing as nonpositional understanding. Understanding is always positional; it stands at a given point in history. There is no privileged access . . . that stands outside of history and outside one's own horizon of understanding. (p. 224)

Second, unawareness of the genuine question promotes the supposition that the truth about the objects of the researcher's transcendent gaze will be found out. In other words, and paraphrasing the title of Gadamer's seminal work, Truth and Method, unaware of the prior question of which the research question is an expression, the researcher is able to suppose that method will reveal truth.

This string of suppositions is untenable, at once misunderstanding that understanding itself is what human being is (hence, no suspension above it is possible, save death), that only from a genuine acknowledgment of not knowing can genuine knowing obtain, and that a research question presupposes a more fundamental question that dictates the direction that answers to the research question must take. When an unacknowledged prior question replaces the experience of ignorance, the present research question becomes not a question at all but an answer to the prior question posing as a question. This Gadamer calls a false question--one that cannot achieve knowledge because it starts not from the openness of a genuine question grounded in radical negativity, but in false presuppositions (p. 327).

Returning to the problem at hand, research on teacher behavior and research on teacher cognition have shared a prior question. That question has been something like "How can teachers be made more accessible to externally mandated change?" (Carson, 1985). Research on teacher behavior answers this question in one way: Teachers can be improved if those teacher behaviors that increase student achievement can be specified and if means can be devised, whether in teacher education courses or inservice "trainings," to install these behaviors in teachers. Research on teacher cognition answers this question in another way, which now appears only slightly different: Teachers can be improved if their thinking during planning and instruction can be made conducive to program implementation.

This prior question that undergirds both process-product research and research on teacher cognition is the generalized implementation model of

school change stated as a question. The model assumes that curriculum inventions and experimental teaching methods, once identified and favored by educational researchers, curriculum workers, and supervisors, can and should be applied universally. Implementation is the name given to the center-to-periphery diffusion of the plan, and fidelity is a measure of the match between the plan and the form it actually takes in practice.[2] Located in this linear conception of the curriculum development/implementation process, many curricular and instructional inventions have been designed by the "experts" (generally persons external to school sites who supposedly have the necessary theoretical knowledge to guide practice) and subsequently delivered to teachers, who are regarded in this scheme as "curriculum conduits" (Connelly & Ben-Peretz, 1980). Their role in this model is to transmit the program, unadulterated, to students. Few of the programs thus delivered have settled into practice (Fullan & Promfret, 1977). Examples include "new social studies" programs of the 1960s.

This analysis of the prior, or genuine, question helps us see that much research on teachers' behavior and cognition is embedded in the particular value that teachers ought to be competent implementers of others' plans. Consequently, research questions--such as "How do teachers think during instruction?" or "How do teachers plan?" or "What are teachers' implicit theories?"--are all actually opinions aligned in the direction of the genuine question.

The sort of study I am calling inquiry on teachers' mediation of curricula marks a break with this research on teachers' behavior and

cognition by parting with its prior question. It asks instead, "How do teachers make sense of their work, and how do their understandings create the curriculum-in-practice?" This is the study of understanding; as such, it is a hermeneutic rather than a technical project. Now relocated in a different prior question, the claim that "teachers make a difference" has an altogether different meaning. No longer does it mean that teachers make or break a development/implementation process and, consequently, must receive proper inservice training so that they make it rather than break it. This is the discourse of the teacher-as-curriculum conduit. Rather, the same claim, "teachers make a difference," is re-situated in a prior question that regards teachers as curriculum agents, or inquirers-in-practice, whose practice, far from conductive, is intellectual, moral, and inventive.

One might ask, as did one of the reviewers of this symposium, Is not all this mediation talk just a reiteration of the tired argument that teachers cannot be overlooked in the endeavor to implement curriculum innovations? This is an important question. The answer is, Not at all. The genuine question of that assertion, if I understand it correctly, is the generalized implementation model. That this conception is untenable is clear enough when we consider that it has promoted, in the name of fidelity, a sort of mass lobotomizing of the adults in the school building.

Central to teachers' mediation of the curriculum is the concept of "curriculum potential" (Ben-Peretz, 1975). This notion implies that any new curriculum plan is a "new set of unclear meanings" (Olson, 1980) to be

situated and made sensible by practitioners. Of course, there is no meaning external to contexts and, conversely, no contexts that do not appropriate meaning (Mishler, 1979); teachers' thinking and formulations related to a given curriculum plan are thus "indexical" (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970), or contextual in the last instance. Clearly, then, the notion of curriculum potential strikes at the heart of attempts to control schools from the outside, whether by the mandates of lawmakers perfervid about accountability and minimum competencies or the mandates of professors and curriculum supervisors eager to install programs in the schools. Conversely, the notion restores teacher autonomy to the place it has always held in the equation of school change, thereby rebuking even the possibility of a "teacher-proof" curriculum. It shifts the view of teachers from automata to curriculum agents who bring a complex autonomy to bear on curriculum plans, mediating them and thereby constructing their potential-in-practice, whatever that may be (Parker, 1985).

In summary, the hermeneutic turn in research on teachers' pedagogic thought is an attempt to correct a false presupposition about the nature of teachers' practice that necessarily conceals that practice rather than bringing it into the open. The correction is not simply a contrast in methods, although that is included.[3] More fundamentally, it is a raising of a different question. This question emits from negativity, admitting ignorance of teachers' practice; of the processes by which the actual social studies curriculum is created and sustained; and of the proper relationship between, on the one hand, educators who work in universities,

research centers, and central administration buildings and, on the other, educators who work directly with children in schools.

Recovering Teacher Agency

The idea of human agency--or of the human as an intentional being who thinks, acts, and feels--is an ancient one. Consequently, the tradition on which we stand as we endeavor to understand teacher agency deeply colors our understanding of it. Our endeavors at making sense of the way teachers mediate the social studies curriculum are bound up in this "fusion of horizons," this coming together of that which is to be understood and we who would understand (Gadamer, 1985). So, how are we to understand for social education the teacher-as-curriculum-agent? Most important, we can seek to understand it in time and place, and this requires that we understand it against the backdrop of the "scientization" of social and political theory: the adoption by social and political theorists of the ideal of knowledge held in the natural sciences. This emulation of the natural sciences by those engaged in the social, or human, sciences has been the subject of lively argumentation representing a variety of perspectives (e.g., Dilthey, 1961; Gouldner, 1970; Habermas, 1973; Schutz, 1967; Winch, 1958). Steven Jay Gould, in The Mismeasure of Man (1981), calls the phenomenon "physics envy." And, of course, there is a politics to physics envy because particular social interests benefit from it (cf. Foucault, 1980). Emphasizing the politics, we might replace "emulation" with terms like "the positivist offense in our century" (Dallmayr & McCarthy, 1977,

p. 3) or "the monopolistic imperialism" of the logic of the natural sciences (Schutz, 1967, p. 49).

This backdrop could not be more practical. It is the intellectual crisis of our time, which frames our thought and action. Nothing could be more relevant to our present concern, for entangled in positivism is an epistemology of professional practice that sponsors the generalized implementation model and, with it, the denigration of teacher agency. The scientization of human, or social studies is a historically recent development that has paralleled roughly the rise of industrialism in the West since the Reformation. It could not have but taken place since the "positivist offensive" had pervaded contemporary thought with a sweeping doctrine that scientized the act of study. Its four tenets are: First, technology is to be regarded as "no longer exclusively geometrical, mechanical or chemical, but also and primarily political and moral" (Compte in Habermas, 1968, p.77). Second, the scientific method is not to be considered a particular attitude and approach to understanding, but the only way to truth in and of the world, both natural and social. This is the unity of science principle. Third, the goals of natural and human sciences are the same: prediction and explanation. Fourth, the relationship of theory to practice is primarily technical: a question not of purpose and ethics but of means and ends. McCarthy (1985) elaborates:

> If the appropriate general laws are known and the relevant initial conditions are manipulable, we can produce a desired state of affairs, natural or social. But the question of which states of affairs are to be produced cannot be scientifically resolved. It is ultimately a matter of decision, for no "ought" can be derived from an "is," no "value" from a "fact." Scientific inquiry is itself "value-free"; it strives only for objective . . . value-neutral results. (p. 139)

It is in this Zeitgeist and on this heritage that we consider the professional practice called social studies teaching. Let us compare it briefly to the classical world-view it overturned and imagine how social studies teaching might be different if located in it. Aristotle's conception of social and political life admitted of variability and morality. There was, consequently, no endeavor to reduce human experience to general laws by which future actions could be predicted and past events explained. Prediction and explanation were the proper concerns of episteme, or natural science, but the good and just life of the community was a different kind of concern altogether--a practical concern where the constants were ambiguity, fluidity, and uniqueness. For this reason, wise judgment, or phronesis, was the central virtue of practical life.

Indeed, a great distance had to be traveled from this notion of the practical to the technicism of the generalized implementation model. No less than a reconstruction of what it means to be human was necessary. Donald Schon has elaborated the implications of this shift to a scientized version of practice. In The Reflective Practitioner (1983), he claims that the professions are "bound to an epistemology of practice which leaves [them] at a loss to explain, or even describe, the competencies to which we now give overriding importance" (p. 20). That epistemology is positivism's technical rationality, and according to it, professional activity is, at root, professional problem solving. It is "professional" because it is more artful problem solving than might be accomplished by the lay public, and it is more artful because it applies scientific theory and techniques

to the problems it endeavors to solve. This is not the exercise of phronesis but the instrumental adjustment of means to ends that are not themselves brought into the open.

This concept of application defines professionalism in a manner that strips it of human agency--that drains being from practice. What need is there for being, for agency, when what is to be done is the dutiful transmission of a profession's knowledge base to the problem at hand? A knowledge base is thought to be standardized, which, Schon notes, summarizes the technical vision of the relationship between a knowledge base and practice: standardized knowledge is to be applied to specific cases, flattening them out. The epistemic hierarchy in this odd conception of practice is straightforward:

> The application of basic science yields applied science. Applied science yields diagnostic and problem-solving techniques which are applied in turn to the actual delivery of services. The order of application is also an order of derivation and dependence. Applied science is said to "rest on" the foundation of basic science. And the more basic and general the knowledge, the higher the status of its producer. (Schon, 1983, p. 24)

The limits of technicism for the professions are not subtle. Schon cites just a few of the numerous professionally managed debacles since the 1960s, from the Vietnam War and the Bay of Pigs to the accident at Three Mile Island, as well as the now burgeoning self-criticism evident in the professions' own journals. Witness the field of education, including claims of "moribundity" in social education.[4] The professions are entangled in a mistaken understanding of practice that cannot account for

the real flesh and blood world of professional activity. The approbation enjoyed by the professions in the post-war and post-Sputnik years has given way to a crisis of legitimacy felt particularly in such fields as education, social work, criminology, and public policy making, where "experts" did their best to emulate, in their own form of physics envy, the medical and engineering models of research and development. It is a crisis, Schon tells us, grounded in these professions' now self-acknowledged failure to solve the problems that they were, as "professions," supposedly well equipped to solve.

We have now come around the circle. We can locate historically the generalized implementation model for curriculum development and reform. We can recognize it as a not-untypical expression of the technical rationality that overtook research and professional practice. And it should be apparent that human agency has little place in this model, except at the top of the hierarchy where plans are made.

It was Joseph Schwab, a science educator turned generalist, who first brought this misunderstanding of practice to the attention of the curriculum field. He helped break its spell by articulating an alternative vision that required a return to mediation on practical ground. By practical, he did not mean the anti-intellectual resignation to superficiality often connoted in the phrase, "Let's get practical." Rather, with Schon, he referred to:

> . . . a complex discipline, relatively unfamiliar to the academic and differing radically from the disciplines of the theoretic. It is the discipline concerned with choice and action, in contrast with the theoretic, which is concerned with knowledge. Its

> methods lead to defensible decisions, where the methods of the theoretic lead to warranted conclusions, and differ radically from the methods and competencies entailed in the theoretic. (Schwab, 1969, p. 1)

In this and succeeding papers, Schwab turned the attention of some in curriculum away from the field's traditional regard for scientific management and generalized implementation to the project of comprehending phronesis. Schwab thus heralded the old notion that today remains oddly iconoclastic: Teachers are reflective practitioners, their practice is an art, and their curriculum agency is necessarily eclectic and context-bound.

Three Examples

In this section, I want to describe three examples of inquiry on teachers conceived as curriculum agents. I have chosen them for the diversity of methods and concerns they display and for their common interest in understanding how teachers mediate the school curriculum.

Example 1. My first example is Adler and Goodman's related studies of student-teachers' perspectives (Adler, 1984; Goodman & Adler, 1985). What makes these studies of teachers' mediation was their concern to understand understanding: They wanted to comprehend how student-teachers "give meaning and purpose to social studies." They were more interested in actual than imposed meaning, so both studies began by acknowledging and then casting aside "official" conceptions of social studies devised by persons external to school sites (e.g., social studies as citizenship

education, as reflective inquiry, as social science, and as preparation for social roles). In this attempt to uncover the actual, these studies rely on the category teacher perspectives. Their reasoning:

> Unlike more abstract constructs, perspectives are set in the concrete world of actual situations and refer to particular actions. Teacher perspectives take into account how the situation of the school and classroom is experienced; how this situation is interpreted given the teacher's background of experiences, beliefs, and assumptions; and how this interpretation is manifested in behaviors. (Goodman & Adler, 1985, p. 2)

Ethnographic field methods were used in both studies, with an emphasis on the constant-comparative technique in the latter study to generate categories of perspectives directly from the data. The first studied four elementary student-teachers; the second extended the number to 16. Both studies shed light on how perspectives might mediate social studies practice. First, Adler (1984) concluded that student-teachers' perspectives toward social studies accounted for less of their practical mediation than did their broader perspective toward teaching and learning in general. One student-teacher wanted to "get the kids to process information and draw conclusions," yet he daily faced a class seemingly unmotivated to do either. This dilemma pervaded his practice, not only in social studies. Unable to find perspectives that were unique to the mediation of social studies, Adler recommended that "foundations questions"--those broad concerns in which one's social studies teaching is embedded--be taken up in social studies methods classes to encourage an interaction of methods and perspectives.

However, when the number of informants was increased to 16, and grounded theory's constant-comparative technique used to analyze data, six perspectives on social studies itself were developed, and each appeared to shape social studies teaching in numerous ways. One perspective, which Goodman and Adler call "social studies as human relations," defined social studies not as a field of knowledge, but as "teaching children techniques of human relations." Jill, one of the student-teachers with this perspective, had her third-grade class make "Me Mobiles." The children painted on paper plates faces that depicted feelings they often had. Asked to explain what this activity meant, Jill responded:

> We have them do this kind of stuff every Tuesday and Thursday. Each time we pick out a different activity from one of these [human relations] books that helps them get in touch with themselves of other kids in the class. Personally, I think this stuff is a lot more meaningful than the traditional social studies I had as a kid. (Goodman & Adler, 1985, p. 8)

A contrasting mediation was evident in student-teachers with a perspective called, "social studies as school knowledge." They defined social studies as textbook knowledge and were concerned primarily with covering the material in texts and on mimeographed handouts. They evaluated student achievement of this sort of material by asking recall and comprehension questions. Ann, who held this perspective, was asked about the accuracy of the material about which she was quizzing her sixth-grade class. She explicitly acknowledged that it was wrong, but rationalized her instruction in a way the authors found typical of student-teachers with this perspective:

> Maybe that kind of questioning is appropriate for college, but I don't think these kids can handle it. Besides, if I spend a lot of time discussing every little point, we won't finish the chapter in time. (p. 10)

Goodman and Adler present four other perspectives as well. They are social studies as a "nonsubject," as "citizenship," as "the great connection," and as "social action." Each narrative description illustrates, if briefly, how a teacher's perspective on social studies mediates the relationship between teachers and students, and the teachers' practical planning and implementation of the social studies curriculum.

Example 2. A second example is my study of teachers' mediation of a curriculum invention (Parker, 1985). This study emerged from my interest in teachers' transformation of curriculum inventions (e.g., discussion of moral dilemmas, Fenton's inquiry approach, or computer-assisted instruction [CAI]) into classroom practice. I used the term invention after Westbury (1984) to indicate a curriculum intention or form that originated outside a teacher's practice, its potential-in-practice not yet expressed. A great distance must be traveled between the inventor's invention and the teacher's daily work. My interest was in understanding that distance in terms of the mediation by which the invention's particular potential in the hands of a particular teacher was constructed.

I interviewed and observed two elementary teachers over a period of eight months. They both wanted to bring CAI into their classrooms and shared similar understandings of this invention. One teacher, Dorothy, was

a second-grade teacher in an open-space building. She had taught for eight years, the first two at a junior high school. The other, Mary, was a fourth-through-sixth-grade resource teacher who worked with learning-disabled and emotionally disturbed students for one or two periods of their school day. She had been a teacher for nine years, always as a special eduction pull-out teacher at the same school. Dorothy's school had a class set of microcomputers located not far from her classroom; Mary's resource room had just been given two microcomputers by the PTA.

My goal was to understand the themes in their mediation of this invention, and my methods were phenomenological and hermeneutic. This perspective encouraged me to turn even further from a realist understanding of these teachers' mediation as existing "out there" as an object independent of the teachers and myself. It asked me to consider these teachers' mediation as one might consider a literary work. As the word itself suggests, a work is a lived project. There is being in a work, for a work is always a work of some being. A work is always his or her work, or my work or your work. An object, by contrast, is not similarly possessed. So, when studying a work, we are seeking an understanding of the meaning of a creator's creation. When studying teachers' mediation as a work, we realize we are not studying an object, and so we adjust our research accordingly. While natural science has methods appropriate to the understanding of objects, works require a method of understanding appropriate to works qua works. Palmer clarifies:

> Certainly the methods of "scientific analysis" can and should be applied to work, but in so doing the works are treated as silent, natural objects. (1969, p. 8)

Numerous themes appeared in these teachers' mediation of CAI--among them, hope, ambiguity, prior commitments, weariness, excitement, knowing and not knowing, being organized, being innovative, seeking approval, being cooperative and collegial, handling parents and administrators, and maintaining a personal life. The first three were pronounced in Dorothy's and Mary's mediation of CAI, and they are explicated and related in the study. I will only outline them here.

Hope pervaded Dorothy's and Mary's work with their students. Relation per se was, for them, what their practice was about and what it was made of. And hope was constituitive of relation. Their hope was embedded in their lived experience as their "children's" other parents. While van Manen (1984) has remarked that "teachers and even parents seem to have forgotten a certain kind of understanding; what it means to bear children, to hope for children entrusted to their care," Dorothy and Mary had not forgotten, but embodied what van Manen wants: "The being of teaching as <u>in loco parentis</u>" (p. 66). Dorothy and Mary spoke a meliorative language of possibility--a language uncomfortably aware of gaps between real and ideal, between what is given and what is envisioned as better.

Within this hope was a pervasive assumption about social and family pathology--about circumstances threatening to pull the children down, harming them, against which Dorothy's and Mary's hope was the heartfelt desire for upward and forward movement, toward well being and healing, toward the good. Dorothy worried:

> I have a child now who gets absolutely zero at home. . . . A home where there's no love.

And Mary:

> They haven't had parents who talked with them about . . . how the mountains were made.

Dorothy and Mary believed that harmful home environments were holding their children back at the lower rungs of the self-worth and achievement continua, contributing to the very problems they were striving to help their children overcome. This belief galvanized their hope, and understanding this hope helps us understand their enthusiasm to introduce what they saw as a fresh, new experience to their children, even though they were already feeling the strain of a new set of legislative mandates for curriculum reform. Dorothy and Mary located this invention in that part of their practice that contained not the mandated and supervised work of public school technicians but the mollifying work of caring adults who felt they knew their children intimately and whose beings were profoundly implicated in their students' happiness and well being.

Moreover, these teachers' work with CAI was anchored in a way that restrained the scope and depth of changes in their practice that might result. The stabilizing force was a system of a priori pedagogic commitments that helped Dorothy and Mary steer a course between the desirable (implementing a program that would positively affect their students in accordance with their hopes for them) and the undesirable--upsetting their own sense of stability-in-practice. As Dorothy and Mary implemented CAI,

their attention was directed toward the same issues and grounded in the same commitments that had previously been important to them: Dorothy was using this new resource to help her students increase their math achievement and "be the best they can be"--aims she was already pursuing with her students. She appeared to never consider using CAI in her social studies lessons, not surprising when we consider that social studies learning was not a prior anchoring commitment in her practice. Similarly, Mary was intending to use CAI to help close the gap between her special education students and the other children at school and to help them succeed at grade level. Both were intentions she held prior to her decision to bring CAI into her practice. Since the gap was for Mary chiefly a gap in reading, writing, and mathematics scores, the use of computers in social studies instruction was simply not a concern.

Incorporation of CAI proceeded with no apparent alteration in these teachers' current, preferred ways of thinking about learning, teaching, and the curriculum; indeed, the new resources were held in awareness in a way that reinforced existing theories and assumptions. By holding their commitments constant, as foundations for their practice, Dorothy and Mary were able to work with CAI in ways that minimized what <u>had</u> to be minimized: strain-in-practice. They remind us that the practical is "necessarily a realm of uncertainty" (Gauthier, 1963,p. 167). Listening to Dorothy and Mary portray the activity of teaching school and their endeavors to introduce something new and worthwhile to their students was in large measure a listening to the themes of ambiguity and strain and their simultaneous

amelioration through reference to prior commitments. These commitments structured the ambiguity aroused by the change effort and, generally, kept it from escalating to strain.

Example 3. Henry Giroux, with Stanley Aronowitz, has written a critical analysis of the social function of intellectual work, in which he advocates viewing teachers as intellectuals (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985; Giroux, 1985a, 1985b). I include this theoretical study as the third example for two reasons. First, it politicizes the category of teacher mediation, relating it to the perpetuation and transformation of current purposes of schooling and ways of organizing social life. Second, it explicates the relationship between the material conditions of teachers' work and the nature of their curriculum mediation.

The prior question of this study leads in the opposite direction from studies that arise in the generalized-implementation model. Its prior question can be stated as, How might educators help construct new forms of society that are free from current patterns of unfairness? Giroux begins by drawing on the new sociology of education, which has demonstrated the subordination of schools to dominant social groups and ideologies, and on the Aristotelian notion of practice, which assumes the integration of thinking and action, to construct what is essentially the same argument as was given in the first two sections of this paper: Teachers are intellectuals, but their intellectual labor has been rendered instrumental by a division of labor that separates conception from execution; consequently,

their mediation of the curriculum has been confined to that permitted of lower-level civil servants. This separation of theory from practice is, Giroux argues, a material condition of teachers' work that inclines their mediation toward the bureaucratic, which is to say the instrumental, rather than toward the critical and creative. The implications of this bureaucratization of teachers' intellectual labor are far-reaching. Most important, it promotes by default the continuation of current social practices regardless of the degree to which they may be fair and empowering or dominating and alienating.

Having situated teachers' mediation in the context of ideological and economic conditions, Giroux then extends his view of teachers as intellectuals by specifying four types of mediation. Each is an ideal-typical category of the social function of educators as intellectuals. As such, he points out, a teacher's mediation is not confined to one or another but may move among categories. The categories are (a) transformative intellectual, (b) critical intellectual, (c) accommodating intellectual, and (d) hegemonic intellectual. The defining attribute of the first category is the integration of "critical discourse and political practice." Not limited to the rationalities and loyalties of the professional and academic groups in which they must function, these teachers-as-intellectuals "seek links with groups fighting to change the schools, to oppose their tendency towards authoritarian modes of teaching and administration" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 56). Their mediation of the social studies curriculum seeks self-consciously the democratization of study, the classroom, and the

school. They invite the widest expression of points of view and arguments, and the widest participation of teachers, students, and parents. They operate "in the emancipatory interest," which directs them toward critical and visionary thinking, toward engaging their students in the struggle to develop a better world, and also toward self-criticism as a means to improve their practice. This category clearly recognizes schools as political sites that are implicated in "the way things are," not neutral zones that somehow plod onward, independent of the milieu.

By contrast, critical intellectuals, while also opposed to the status quo and dominant ways of making sense of social and political reality, do not consider themselves social-political actors. Nor do they consider themselves implicated in the particular society and professional and academic groups in which they must function. Their role as intellectuals, then, calls for criticism but not activism. In this sense, their physical relationship to social formations is free-floating. They remain on the sidelines, preferring not to link with particular social movements, arguing that this would distort their search for and practice of objective reason. Their mediation of the social studies curriculum, then, avoids stepping into the fray, although, like teachers in the previous category, they would think critically about the given curriculum and engage their students in the critique of the given world.

Accommodating intellectuals, on the other hand, would do neither. These teachers-as-intellectuals "generally stand firm within an ideological posture and set of material practices that support the dominant society

and its ruling groups" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1985, p. 58). Not typically self-conscious agents of the status quo, these teachers consider themselves free-floating thinkers engaged in what they presume to be scientific, value-free discourse. Nevertheless, "they function primarily to produce and mediate uncritically ideas and social practices that serve to reproduce the status quo" (p. 58).

Finally, hegemonic intellectuals are self-conscious agents for various dominant groups. They define themselves by their identification with these groups and mediate the curriculum in a way that legitimates the existing order.

This study not only advances a view of teachers as intellectuals, which would be provocative enough, it also imbues teachers' intellection with political content and effect. It thereby creates a transformation/reproduction continuum by which teacher agency can be probed. This constitutes an important check on what can otherwise be an inclination in research on mediation to ignore the weight of social context on agency.[5]

Conclusion

This paper has introduced the idea of teachers' mediation of the social studies curriculum. Considerable space was devoted to the tradition and distinctions on which this work stands. Gadamer's notion of the genuine question was considered in order to illuminate the distinction between this line of inquiry and research on teacher behavior and cognition that

preceded it and made it necessary. The Aristotelian notion of phronesis, taken up by Schon and Schwab, was introduced to help clarify contrasting visions of professional practice. Two poles were implied: The teacher-proof project of the generalized-implementation model, and the teacher-mediated project inherent in the notion of curriculum potential. These establish a dialectic that those who conduct research on teaching can ignore only with some peril.

The three examples display the breadth in research on teachers' mediation in social education. Others equally diverse could have been included (Carson, 1984; Elbaz, 1983; Stone, 1985; Thornton, 1984). Together they suggest a program of work that should help restore understanding to being and being to teaching. Moreover, they are attempts to explore alternatives to the application of scientized research methods to education. The methods used in these three studies (ethnography, phenomenology, and critical analysis) just hint at the promise of methods that attempt to deal with humans as humans.

Yet, this work should not be considered an argument for the exclusive use of particular methods, say, qualitative over quantitative. Our predicament is hardly as simple as a methodological debate, and educational researchers need to press beyond dicotomous classifying about how best to carry on their inquiries. Rather, this work is an endeavor to step back from the technical, not to reject it so much as to see it for what it is, while moving other voices into the circle.

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Endnotes

[1]See Nisbett and Wilson (1977).

[2]See Fullan (1982).

[3]In the foreword to the second edition of Truth and Method (1985), Gadamer is clear about this distinction, saying:

> The [problem] that confronts us [between the methodical spirit of science and his philosophical hermeneutics] is not in the method, but in the objectives of knowledge. The question I have asked seeks to discover and bring into consciousness something that methodological dispute serves only to conceal and neglect, something that does not so much confine or limit modern science as precede it and make it possible. (p. xviii)

[4]See Newman, 1984.

[5]Phenomenology has been criticized for being individualistic, or socially naive. William Mayrl, for example, considers it "an exercise in avoidance":

> The assumption of the priority of individual consciousness over history and the division of labor represents the feeble attempt to control these perplexing realities by substituting them for something which seems more manageable. (1977,p. 277)